

Yobasayeo!
This is your semi annual news update from Friends of Korea.
Kathleen Barco and Sherrill Davis are your editors.
If you have news items to share, email: news@friendsofkorea.net.
We anticipate the next issue will be in April of 2018.

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Friends of Korea

Dedicated to fostering cultural awareness and
friendship between Americans and Koreans

여보세요

a quarterly newsletter of Friends of Korea

November 2017

News



Peace Corps Reunion 2018

The dates and the location have been set! **We will be reuniting in Los Angeles from Tuesday, June 19 to Friday, June 22.**

Based on your feedback, the reunion's primary focus will be social—and fun! We will be in a town with innumerable Korean restaurants (serving some of the best Korean food in the U.S.) as well as many Korean-owned shops and cultural venues. In addition, there is all of Hollywood and Los Angeles to be seen and experienced.

Dan Strickland (K-18) is point man on our reunion. He is putting together and prioritizing a list of possible activities. Already set is a visit to the USC Doheny Korean Heritage Library for a talk with Joy Kim, curator of the library and Friends of Korea board member about the Peace Corps Korea digital archive. Other possibilities include a K-group supper or two, a rumored invitation to the LA Consul-General's residence, a good Korean movie at the CGV cinema, a cooking class on kimchee or pindayduk? at the Korean Cultural Center, or perhaps a talk on the Korean migration to LA. If you're interested in helping, planning, or have suggestions, contact Dan Strickland at danstrickland2001@yahoo.com.



The K-4s Celebrate 50! By Cassandra Gaines

Imagine the cheerful chaos of 112 people of three generations gathered at Ghost Ranch in Abiquiu, New Mexico from August 14-22 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the K-4 Peace Corps training there in the fall of 1967. This was the 14th reunion of our group, but it had a special poignancy this year as illness and a recent death had reduced our count. But we also had much to celebrate as four of our original training staff were able to join us, along with two people whose parents had been PC staff in Korea. As always with our reunions, we reveled in the beauty of Ghost Ranch's red-and-orange cliffs, wooded mesas and mountains, and the view across the valley to our mountain, Pedernal.



The first five days were family time. They were filled with activities like a hike to Chimney Rock, swimming, a train ride on an historic mountain



Home base will be the JJ Grand Hotel in the heart of Koreatown. We have rooms set aside there and the hotel has sister facilities where we can put up more people. This is the hotel used by the K2s for their reunion. It is Korean-owned, they enjoyed hosting the K2s, and they are pleased to host our reunion. There are places for small groups to gather in the hotel, and there is a coffee shop and restaurant. The restaurant has catered gatherings at the LA Korean Cultural Center and the Consul-General's residence (and Dan swears by the tastiness of their food).

[JJ Grand Hotel](#)

\$125 + tax, double beds (block of 35 is reserved), or \$110 + tax, single king bed (block of 5 is reserved)

To book a room, send an email to info@jjgrandhotel.com. Request a room type (double or single) with check in and out dates. Mention you are with the Korea Peace Corps Reunion. If you must follow-up for some reason, our contact there is Hannah Nam; however, initial reservations must be made by email.

Updates and deadlines will be posted on the [FOK Reunion page](#) and on the [Korea RPCV Facebook page](#).



railroad, Rio Grande river-rafting, a campfire sing-along, and a guided hike to the high country. Nightly post-dinner gatherings were times for stories and happy conversations until midnight. And many of the K-4 group toured the new lakeside trail that is our gift to the Ranch in honor of K-4's 50th Reunion.

On Saturday morning, the 16 children of the original trainees (generation 2) left the Ranch with their 19 children (generation 3). They have already begun plans to take over planning all future all-generation reunions. Meanwhile, Joy Kim and Ken Klein of the USC Doheny East Asian Library had joined us to collect materials and record memories of trainees and training staff. We kept them busy.

In the quieter days after generations 2 and 3 left, we held a discussion of Yoojin Grace Wuertz's novel set in '70s and '80s Korea, "[Everything Belongs to Us](#)," which triggered wild stories and reflections on life in Korea in the late '60s. About 25 of us gathered for a two-hour discussion on how individuals can help promote peaceful dialogue, including the issue of U.S. relations with North Korea. People gathered in the ranch's library lounge to leaf through photo albums and memorabilia, and many hours passed talking with friends under the cottonwood trees.

The reunion ended with two special ceremonies. The first was a memorial in the beautiful Agape chapel sharing remembrances of those trainees, training staff, and in-country staff who have passed away. The second was a celebration of our strong attachment to Ghost Ranch and each other when we honored Dr. Jim Justice, the leader of our training and our work in Korea, with the donation of a stone bench on the new trail.



Viewpoints on Korea

Hotcakes in the Street By Giles Ryan

Early in my time teaching in Chunchŏn, one



A Viewpoint on Korea Street Fashion By Michael Hurt

Here's the thing. I'm not a fashion guy. I'm not a fashionable guy. But I do find Korean street fashion endlessly, academically fascinating. I always have, since stumbling into its direction through my photography in around late 2006. I've been shooting street fashion portraits at Seoul Fashion Week from 2007 until now. But it wasn't for the fashion, per se. I also use my photographs as social data, since my field of specialization is Visual Sociology.

When I have taught Visual Sociology at both Korea and Yonsei Universities in the past, I have always utilized street fashion as a case study and even sent my students to do photographs and ethnographic interviews with so-called "paepi" (the Korean portmanteau word for "fashion people") at Seoul Fashion Week. Put simply, Korean street fashion is pretty awesome not because of the particular creativity of DIY styles or because it's an amazing, edgy subculture--because it's neither of those two things. Korea doesn't have a Harajuku and likely never will. Hell, even Japan doesn't have a Harajuku anymore. That's over. And the overall success of fast fashion is what killed it. Harajuku was killed by the mainstreaming of the very process that created it.

The thing to understand about the paepi of Korean street fashion is that they don't really represent any subcultural values different from the mainstream. Instead, they are a fascinating new class of Korean superconsumers--a group of youth who have found a way to gain social validation quickly and efficiently by turning what Marx called the "commodity fetish" (Warenfetischismus) into a creative endeavor. They flipped a failing of capitalism into a veritable art form. They turned consumption into creation. As the cultural product of hypermodernity, the Korean paepi are a testament to the power of human creativity to make the best out of a soulless system, to remix various social tendencies of postcoloniality, Korea's compressed development, and the cultural hybridity and textual impurity/mixture that helped make K-pop a culture industry juggernaut.

Michael Hurt first went to Korea as part of the Fulbright Korea ETA (English teaching assistant) program (1994-1996). He now lives in Seoul as a photographer and professor teaching Visual Sociology.

chilly evening in the winter of 1970 when I left school as the sun was going down, I saw several first-year boys at the school-yard gate, gathered around the cart of a street vendor who was making ho-ttök, a hot griddle cake with melted sugar in the middle. I had seen the ho-ttök man before, had been tempted by the aroma of his cakes, but had never tried one, for I knew that eating on the street was not a proper thing for a teacher to do. But as I passed by, one of the boys called out, "Yang-sönsaeng, will you please try one?" His friends were laughing at his boldness, punching his arm, wondering what I would do. I thought, why not? and so I joined them and--listening closely--tried to understand their lively talk.

Schoolboys would always use the most polite language when speaking to a teacher but among themselves they discarded anything like courtesy, dropped all their verb endings, used coarse slang--it was pure boy talk and very hard to understand. (Did I speak like this way when I was a boy? Of course I did!) My co-workers always encouraged my efforts to learn Korean but cautioned me against speaking like the students--it would never do--and when I asked the teachers about the meaning of the boys' slang they often gave evasive answers, which made me all the more curious. Now in this moment the boldest boy handed me the ho-ttök wrapped in a scrap of newspaper and--with a transition to the most courteous language--asked me to try it. It was very hot and warmed my hand. I bit into it, almost burned my mouth with the melted sugar and savored the wonderful hot sweetness. They all watched my face, could tell I was surprised by the taste and they all laughed--with me? at me?--and asked if I would have another. I said yes but only if they would let me buy, so I paid for the next batch and handed them around. It was perhaps my first close encounter with schoolboys outside the formality of the classroom, and this shared moment and others like it remains vivid in my memory.

Where are they now? Forty years have passed and they will now be well into middle age. I can only hope they have prospered as much as their country in all these years. I like to think these boys have been a part of their country's success--in fact, I'm certain of it. For the best of them--which means most of them--combined brightness with hard work, determination, discipline and another quality--vivacity--which I believe tells much of the story that is their country today.

Giles Ryan (K-12) was a TESL middle school teacher in Chunchön, Gangwondo.

Viewpoints on Korea and more

Korea in Me

By Donna Sidwell DeGracia



Korea has been a part of me for most of my life. My parents took me to South Korea when they became Methodist Missionaries in 1955. I was four years old. I grew up in three separate cultures, the Korean culture, the mission culture, and whatever semblance of American culture my parents could find in Korea in the 1950s and 60s. None of their efforts prepared me for the culture shock of returning to the United States in 1967.

By the time I joined the Peace Corps in 1972 I thought I was fully American and ready to explore the world. I was disappointed when I was

assigned to Korea, but when our plane broke through the clouds over Gimpo and I saw the familiar mountains I knew I was home.

Peace Corps brought me full circle, allowing me to experience Korea on a different level and from a more mature perspective. The Peace Corps culture was a new and exciting edition that let me share the experience with new friends.

After two-and-a-half years in the Peace Corps, I knew that I either had to leave Korea or stay forever. Other volunteers faced the same struggle. Korea was in all of us. It wouldn't leave us alone. Going home was harder than anticipated.

Acculturation back to the U.S. was a familiar process for me. I divorced myself from the Peace Corps culture and from other returned volunteers. I needed a lot of time to process my mixed identity and my often-incongruent perspective. I needed to understand how Korea was a part of me that I could never escape. It took me years to embrace and appreciate the Korea in me as the amazing gift that it was.

Once I embraced it I was able to process it through writing about acculturation. I focused on the experiences of missionaries and their children, but found that my book struck a chord with others who had been in Korea. I finally returned to Korea after 38 years away for the first of a series of trips that led me to new adventures, new friends, and a sincere appreciation for Korea today.

The Korea in me is reflected in all that I do. Peace Corps allowed me to recognize, develop, and appreciate that part of me.

Donna Sidwell began her Peace Corps career as a K-26 volunteer teaching at Chonbuk University; she then trained with K-31 and relocated to Taegu where she worked in maternal and child health.

Chun Bin Yim receives Ellis Island Medal of Honor

In May 2017, Chun Bin (Charlie) Yim (이문빈), a lifetime member of Friends of Korea and a former PC Korea staff member, was awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. The event was held at Ellis Island in the Great Room, where immigrants were processed.

According to the Ellis Island Honors Society, the medals are "presented annually to American citizens who have distinguished themselves within their own ethnic groups while exemplifying the values of the American way of life."

Congratulations Mr. Yim!



Sunhee's Farm and Kitchen
By Barbara Casey



Jinah Kim (center) on the front steps of Sunhee's Kitchen, with some of her staff.

Sunhee's Farm and Kitchen, in Troy, N.Y., differs from other Korean restaurants that have opened in the Capital District since the 1970s. It doesn't pretend to be a Japanese restaurant with a small section of Korean dishes or even a separate menu for Korean customers or American lovers of Korean food.

It has a strictly Korean menu, but with a twist. The restaurant provides mostly organic farm-to-table food grown at the owner's family farm, dishes such as soon dubu chigae and bibimbop are served with purple rice, and almost everything is grown and prepared by refugee immigrants. A young business, Sunhee's won the Best New Business Award in 2016 and this year Ms. Kim was named an "Inspiring Woman of the Capital Region" by ABC/News 10 of Albany, NY.

Another innovation for this area is that much of the organic produce used in dishes at Sunhee's is grown by the family of restaurateur Jinah Kim (김진아) at a farm in upstate New York. The farm is 100 percent organic and specializes in hard-to-find Korean vegetables like ginseng, perilla leaves (gaenip, often translated as "sesame leaves") and Korean hot peppers, as well as cucumbers, zucchini and garlic. The farm also produces duck eggs and has branched out by offering an on-site Korean barbecue brunch and a kimchi-making workshop.

The greatest innovation at Sunhee's, however, is Ms. Kim's commitment to employ refugees, at competitive wages, as a large part of its workforce. Ms. Kim, who moved to the U.S. with her family in 1993, felt a strong urge to help refugees after hearing about Koreans who escaped from North Korea. She helped refugees from many countries when she worked for Catholic Charities in New York City and also volunteered with an organization that assisted North Korean refugees.

In Albany, N.Y., across the Hudson River from Troy, Jinah Kim worked as a job developer with the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants. Opening Sunhee's allowed her to continue helping refugees find work. She is still in contact with staff members at USCRI, who refer refugees looking for employment.

Sunhee's current workforce includes a number of refugees from Burma and Afghanistan. That there are Afghan refugees in the U.S. may be no surprise, but it is perhaps not as widely known that there are still tens of thousands of refugees from Burma in camps in Thailand waiting to be resettled. Some of them have been in the camps for decades.

Jinah Kim is doing what she can to help refugees from many places. Kudos to Ms. Kim for her humanitarian work! .

Barbara Casey (K-43) taught middle school English in Pusan.



A Little Shop by the Sea By Bob Graff

Looking out his window on September 1, 2009 from the 15th floor of the Guk Jae Building in Seoul, Bob realized that, after 25 years, his career with Samil PricewaterhouseCoopers was over.

This was not the first time he had experienced feeling something he enjoyed was ending and he smiled at the thought of his Peace Corps experience coming to a close. Time to go, what next?

He had been preparing for this moment. He had taken Korean citizenship in 2007, so a visa was no longer an issue and his savings from consulting were sufficient. The questions were: where to go, what to do?

Gangneung is on the East Sea coast and still retains enough natural environment and traditional atmosphere to draw this country boy (now 70). That, and the fact his partner's hometown was there was sufficient.

He built a fair size home on a large plot of land and his gentrification began. Visitors called it paradise. They were wrong, it was Olympic. In July of 2014 Korea was selected for the 2018 Winter Olympics and Bob's home was located where the newly constructed Olympic Speed Skating arena now stands.

The government buyout, relocation, and rebuild put him 500 meters from an entrance to Olympic ice event arenas. Thinking to the future, the site was large enough for him to live on the second floor and have a business on the first. Thus was born the Unde Bob Coffee Cafe, now serving light foods, coffee of course, and, perhaps beer and wine for the Olympics. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/undebobkr> for a virtual visit but, better yet, come for the Olympics and visit Bob.

Bob Graff was a healthcare volunteer (K 18) in Young Gwang Gun and in Kwangju, both in Cholla Nam Do. In addition to managing "Unde Bob Coffee Cafe," he hosts volunteers teaching English to Gangneung taxi drivers and is a senior lecturer at SolBridge International School of Business, Daejeon, Korea.

Facebook Pages of Interest

Have you seen these Facebook pages? Check them out:

- Korea Heritage Society
- Peace Corps Travels
- RPCV Jobs
- US PEACE CORPS - SOUTH KOREA
- Korea: I Remember When...

Events of Interest

New York

An Evening of Korean Art Songs: Solo recital by soprano Seung-Hyun Lee
Sunday, November 5, 2017
7:30 pm
Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall
154 West 57th Street, New York, NY, 10019

Boston Area

KCSB Chamber Concert with Chinese Performing Arts Foundation
Featuring the Parker Quartet with Jung-ja Kim, piano and Charles Clements, double bass
November 4, 2017
8:00 PM
Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston

Layers & Layers: Jung Hur
November 5, 2017 - February, 28, 2018
Korean Consulate Gallery
300 Washington St. Newton, MA

The 5th Lunar New Year Celebration at MFA
February 10, 2018
Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston
Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese organizations participate.

Los Angeles

Special Concert: Dream of PyeongChang
November 01, 2017
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM
Celebrating the 100-day Countdown to the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics: with the Creative Traditional Orchestra of the National Gugak Center of Korea
Wilshire Ebell Theatre, Los Angeles
4401 West 8th Street, Los Angeles

Exhibition: The longest journey is from our heads to our hearts
November 03, 2017 - November 16, 2017 (and other dates-check the Center's calendar)
Korean Cultural Center Los Angeles Art Gallery
5505 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles

Traditional Korean Cultural Heritage Workshop: Talchum, Korean Mask Dance
November 30, 2017
1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles 3rd Floor (Ari Hall)
5505 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles

Korean Movie Night
November 30, 2017
7:00 PM
Korean Movie Night is held on the last Thursday of every month
Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles 3rd Floor (Ari Hall)
5505 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles

San Francisco

Exhibition: Couture Korea
November 3, 2017 - February 4, 2018
Asian Art Museum,
200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Seattle Area

20th Annual New Year Celebration featuring Korea
Asia Pacific Cultural Center
February 10, 2018
11 am - 6 pm
Tacoma Dome Exhibition Hall

Washington DC

The 2nd Annual Korean Culture Week
November 3, 2017

On Stage: Korea Fairytale
November 7, 2017

Exhibition: Beneath the Surface
November 3 - 30, 2017

Exhibition: Two Reflections: Korean and American Artists Confront Humanity and Nature
December 8, 2017 - January 24, 2018

All Washington, DC events listed above will be held at:
The Korean Cultural Center
2370 Massachusetts Avenue N.W. Washington, D.C. 20008

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Korea: an Accidental Photographer
Photographs by Margaret Condon Taylor, RPCV
December 7, 2017 - January 7, 2018
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

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